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Death, of course, is an important phase of human life, but business failure is also a critical or turning point. The Lolo rely upon agricultural products for their principal food; whenever drought occurs to threaten the crops, the Lolo will undertake a rain-praying ceremony in order to control the weather through magic. To pray for rain, they always use a white sheep or a white chicken to propitiate the mountain spirit. The pi-mu performs magic by scattering chicken blood and feathers in different places so that it will look like rain and snow. This is also [102] imitative magic. The recognition of white birds and animals as something sacred and mysterious is a universal phenomenon in primitive society. For example, the white horse in Syria and Central Asia, and the white ox, white deer, and white fox among the American Indians are all considered supernatural. When the pi-mu performs, the villagers would help by yelling and making a loud noise. Some of them would shoot a gun to shock the mountain spirit, while the others would cry madly to scare away the ghosts and evil spirits. They run around and bestir themselves to the utmost to enable the rain to fall down from the precipices and to help accomplish the purpose of magic.

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The Lolo have many kinds of interdiction which is called "taboo" in the English language. According to Frazer's interpretation, it is a negative magic. For instance, people are forbidden to step over the kitchen stove because it will offend the god of fire, the basic reason being that fire can harm human life; it is forbidden to saddle a horse inside the house because this is connected with the ritual for sending off the dead; a person going on a trip is not allowed to sweep the ground before leaving the house lest the evil spirits follow him and cause him trouble on the road. Interdictions like these are too many to be enumerated. Whereas positive magic is what ought to be done to achieve a certain goal, negative magic is what should not be done to avoid misfortune. Therefore, interdiction is only an extension of magic.

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The Lolo also practice the ordeal, which is another form of magic, to determine a person's guilt. For instance, groping for an egg is used for trying a suspect. This method calls for the pi-mu to first recite the scripture, then boil a large pan of water, and throw the egg in it. The suspect is ordered to put his hand in the boiling water to pick up the egg. If his hand is not scalded, he is proved innocent. The method of chewing rice in the mouth is another kind of ordeal. After the pi-mu has recited the scripture, the suspect is asked to put a small pinch of red or white rice into the mouth and to spit it out after

695 chewing to see if there is any blood on the rice. If not, then he is not guilty. Ordeal is practiced on members of the same clan for stealing, robbing, cheating, and so forth. While it is an honorable deed to rob and steal from enemy clans, it is considered a crime to do the same to members of one's own clan. [673
609] Sometimes crimes can be resolved through a blood covenant. Also, a white Lolo, if he wants, can win the black Lolo's confidence through swearing or candid confession. To do this, he kills a chicken and drops its blood into the wine, which he drinks in one draught. This will have the effect of signifying that any unlawful cheating of his master will result in his suffering the same fate as the dead chicken.

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789 Covenant is a form of action used by the Lolo to win the confidence of others. Its performance involves the use of magic, but it is also a contract according to primitive law. Whenever there are business transactions, guarantees for safe travel, or an alliance in clan-feud fighting, they always hire a pi-mu to kill the chicken and imprecate over it, both sides [103] pledging each other with blood wine. There is another example called "ch'ü ox hide," a form of covenant made by the black Lolo when they surrender to Han-Chinese officials, or when they guarantee the safe passage of Han-Chinese officials in Liang Shan. To perform it, they kill an ox and hang its skin with the head, tail, and four legs on a wooden scaffold, the whole should look like an ox standing with its head facing east and the tail toward the west. At the time the pi-mu recites the scripture and performs magic, the black Lolo who are surrendering crawl in from under the tail of the ox and then come out from under the head; meanwhile they swear that they will not rebel again. The blood wine is then brought forth and drunk together by both the Han-Chinese and the Lolo. As the most solemn form of covenant, it is also a manifestation of the magic power that rules over Lolo society.

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crossed the ferry had sent a spy across to see what the 000
foreigner was doing in Nosuland. Other messengers had
been sent elsewhere to plot against us and to get us into
trouble. Mr Tien had lost in the first game but he was not
willing by any means to own that he had lost the rubber.
We were to hear more of this enemy before we got safely
back home again. The spy came by a shorter way to See-tieh
than we had, and so he had reached the place before our
arrival. In a very simple way he had blocked our plans.
He had given the old man a present of a jar of samshu.
The old man, in the presence of this temptation, had promptly
succumbed, and when we arrived he was quite drunk, and
remained more or less so all the time we stayed at the farm-
stead. When, later on, they were trying to tell him about the
wonders of the magic-lantern, he replied: "I don't care
about it a bit, all I want is 'Give me more to drink.'" It
was a great disappointment to have our sources of informa-
tion so effectually dammed up. There was no help for it,
and we did the best we could without the old man. As for
Mr Tien, I am afraid some of us did not feel very sweetly
disposed towards him.

Coming along that day towards Ah-Pooh's home, one of 628
the Nosu travelling with us pointed to a spot where some 695
years before he had seen a great trial by ordeal. When an
accusation is brought against anyone there is often an appeal
to the ordeal. If the affair is one between two families a
slave is chosen from each side, and these two have to undergo
the ordeal. The two sides gather together in some selected
spot and the wizards direct the operations. A huge wood
fire is lighted and on this is placed a large iron pan of water.
This water is boiled until the steam rises in clouds. An egg

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628 is then thrown into the centre of the boiling water. The
695 slave champions then come forward. In turn each has to attempt to snatch the egg out of the water, using only the bare hand and arm to do so. The actual snatching is preceded by the chanting of the assembled wizards and by a protest of innocence on the part of both sides. Providence is expected to favour the innocent by blowing the steam away from their champion, towards the other side, and by some remarkable movement at the same time blowing the egg towards the edge of the pan nearest him. It is easy in such a case to snatch the egg out without harm. Burning of the hand and arm is taken as a sign of guilt.

This Nosu trial by ordeal is somewhat similar to that so common among the Chinese. With the latter oil is often used instead of water. The champions have to thrust their arms into the boiling oil, and the absence of burning is similarly taken as the sign of innocence. Needless to say, it is nothing of the kind.

618 When we got comfortably settled into Ah-Pooh's home,
621 and had got used to the light of the darkness, we began to find out a few particulars about the people with whom we were staying. We were told that Ah-Pooh had two sons living, five grandsons and two granddaughters. His clan of the Nhe family numbered nearly six hundred young fighting men. The neighbouring family, the La-chee, could muster fifteen hundred. All these people were very keen on preventing the chief Too, the leader in the great burning raid, from lording it over them. They were very anxious to know whether I could help them to bring about a better state of affairs, in which they could go about their daily rounds peaceably. It turned out later on that it was easier to help

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Shoh-ee. It cost her husband ten thousand ounces of silver⁵⁷⁸ to win his bride. Not long after the marriage I rested one night in her husband's castle, and was hospitably treated.

The mother-in-law received us in the guest hall, and squatted on the floor, smoking her long pipe while we talked to her. She was nervous, as she had never had a foreigner in her house before. The young husband soon after marriage became very ill, and it was seen that he was in a rapid consumption. Being the only son, and just married, this threatened serious trouble on the estates, in case he died. Many cures were tried but none were successful, and the young consumptive Earth Eye soon left his bride a widow. In the absence of male issue, an uncle came forward and claimed the estates, and from this time forward there was persistent fighting and trouble. The uncle called on all the tenants, and demanded their allegiance, under threat of dire punishment if they refused. The widow and the dowager lady resisted these attempts for a long time, but evidently these women were not made of such stern stuff as the mother of Mr Long, who so successfully fought all the claimants to her lands. Some months after the death of the husband⁵⁷⁸ a son was said to have been born, and of course that made a⁶⁹⁵ change in the state of the struggle. The uncle and his party said that the baby was one purchased from a poor Chinese family, and they gave the name of the hamlet where this family lived. They refused, therefore, to recognise the new heir to the estates. Just at this point, the officials got hold of the case. They have a keen eye for a case that spells money for their pockets, while they leave severely alone most of the terrible tragedies that are such a disgrace to many of these country-sides. The disputants appeared,

578 therefore, in the Chinese law courts, to continue the struggle.
 695 Everybody thought that the only way in which the widow
 could prove the child genuinely her own was by suckling
 it in open court. The mandarin adopted this test, but did
 it in such a way as to carry no conviction to some of the
 onlookers. They evidently forgot that some of these officials
 never want a *cause célèbre* like this settled off too quickly.
 The cow must be milked quite dry before it is sent back to
 its pastures. The mandarin stated in court that the child
 had actually taken the widow's milk, and therefore must be
 genuine. The opposing side said that it was the official
 who had done the drinking, by swallowing a large bribe,
 and that there was no trace of milk in the widow's breast.
 But the case was won *pro tem.* by the widow. She realised,
 however, that that was not the end of the matter, and that
 the struggle would be continued for a long time yet. She
 determined to look about for stronger protection than she
 then possessed. Several days' journey away lived another
 622 Earth Eye, named Peh-eye. He was the strongest man in
 all his district, and ruled almost absolutely, keeping hun-
 dreds of armed retainers and slaves to enforce his bidding.
 Some middle person approached him, and told him about
 the widow who had such difficulty in keeping her husband's
 estates. Mr Peh-eye offered to marry the widow and de-
 fend her lands against all comers. The fact that he was
 very much married already made no difference to the
 arrangement. The chivalrous protector came, married the
 widow, and with his strong bands of armed men soon fought
 off all claimants to the estates. His ruthless way of dealing
 with enemies soon struck terror into the whole district.
 His men made his word law. Woe to anybody who disputed